

Tape #031

An Interview with Sue Watson
Interviewed by Mike Brown

This is an interview with Sue Watson, Vernal, Utah. 15th of August 1977, by Mike Brown of the Golden Age Center.

Brown: Tell me about your parents.

Watson: My father was born in New Jersey and he had a rather colorful background. There was a river in Austria, name Ruple river and it's spelled just like my father's family spelled their name, Ruple. A man who had a horse ranch on this Ruple River in Austria way back when America was brand new. When America was just beginning to be settled up, they raised some beautiful Arabian horses and were very proud of the strain. Well, somebody came galloping back from America and telling what a wonderful country it was over there and all that, and what opportunities there were in both the United States and Canada. These three devilish boys, whose father owned this ranch and the father couldn't do anything with them anyway, so when they wanted to go to America, he thought well by gosh that might just be the thing they needed. So he fitted them out with two boats one for the horses, because he wanted them to have this fine strain of Arabian horses that he was so proud of there and then a boat for the people. So he fitted so they could make the journey to America. They had hay and grain and that sort of thing on the horse boat and they towed the horse boat behind the other boat. Now this isn't the days of sailing vessels it was long before they ever had steam. When they were in mid-Atlantic terrible storm came up and they realized they had to cut the horse boat loose or both boats would go down. They turned the horses loose to the water and the hay and grain just hoping against hope they would drift ashore some place. But of corse never heard anything of them from that time on. Whether the ship foundered or just what happened. But anyway, their sailing ship came on and landed in New York and one of them saw great possibilities in the real estate in New York. So he went in the real estate business and did right well. Another one went to Canada, he got into politics and was finally elected to what we would call a governor of a state, I think call it governor of a province up there. The other one came down to New Jersey and he started a tavern, he bought a tavern, really, already started. He had a good life, oh that was glorious, and he had lots of friends and so one. He got married and had several children.

Well, there were three son's that came over from Austria, and there were threes son's born to this family this first generation in America. About the time when the Civil War came on , why these boys were wild to go to war. Well, the mother tried to keep the youngest one home, and that was the one, well, I have to go back a little bit. The first two men prospered, the one in New York, prospered and the who went to Canada prospered and the one who had brought the tavern had whale of a good time. But the time did come when he lost everything and by that time he had three boys that were around twelve, fourteen, fifteen, there-about and so on.

When the Civil War came up everybody was enlisting to go to the Civil War, then my dad was around thirteen or fourteen something like that. But he was just as tall as his two older brothers, so he felt of course he could get in, if two older brothers could get in he could get in too. So they went down and they all enlisted and they were all accepted. There was one sergeant

who kept looking at my Dad and looking at him, and it worried dad. Anyway a couple of days later he was mustered out of the army and sent home, because they had found out how young he was. The railroad was just starting to be built back east, to come west and he got a job on the railroad.

That was the best thing that ever happened to him because he learned to make things. He could take old horse shoes and make teeth for the mowing machine. He knew how to make steel out of iron and a lot of things like that on the railroad. When he got to Evanston he met my mother. Mother was always a good swimmer she couldn't remember the time she couldn't swim. When she saw this man fishing down the stream that run into this beaver pond where she was swimming, she just dived into the beaver pond and swam across. Well, he's seen her go in and he thought she had fallen in, so he went to rescue her, and it's the same old story, this has been written up so many times. But this is my version of this particular story. When he jumped in to rescue this child as he thought, the little devil was over on the other side of the beaver pond, laughing at him when he came up, he was pretty well water logged himself, well, anyway they were married and lived scrapily ever after.

They heard about the Uintah Basin, what a wonderful place it was and they decided they would come over here. So my grandfather and one of his son's came with them. Dad had been with the Indian Agency for quite some time. The agent was a stinker and the Indians hated him horribly and the white men that worked at the agency didn't blame the Indians for hating him. He was a southern gentleman, and he wanted you to know that he was a southern gentleman. He wanted the Indians to bow and scrape to him. Like the niggers did in the south. The Indians came to dad and said they weren't going to bow and scrape to the S.B. They didn't think that much of him and didn't think he was worth it and so on. The first that mother realized that there was going to be trouble was when the boys in the Indian school began drawing wild pictures in their books and on paper and so on fighting pictures and they would draw pictures of Indians shooting arrow from when they were down, from under the horses neck and all that sort of thing. She told the men about it and they begin looking and sure enough the kids, and they were pretty well kissed off with this Indian agent. The Indian kids were lucky to be very closed mouthed about anything they'd heard that the Indian men had said. But these pictures sort of gave them away. Sure enough, a short time after that, one morning, one Sunday morning a mother and dad were just getting up and they heard bang, bang, bang, just wild shooting and so on and so forth, everybody screaming and yelling, and they ran to the door and here came the old Major and just as tight as he could run. Mother said he was old and he was fat but she said he went over that picket fence like and athlete he was so terrified. Dad opened the door and the Major just slid his length on his belly on the floor. Dad slammed the door quick enough to keep old Yank out. Yank was the chief and he was a darn good chief and a very intelligent man, my folks always said. Yank was so full of fury about the Major using that old Nail Keg gag, you've all heard about. Where the money was brought in Nail Kegs to make the Indians think they were just nails instead of money. They tried that once and got away with it, when they tried it a second time old Yank was more furious about, to think that the Indian agent thought he was so stupid that he wouldn't catch on that it was money in those kegs. So that was why, he had endured this man's high hatting the Indians to the point where he just couldn't take anymore. Yank ran around the house about sixteen times before Dad could get him quieted down enough to pow-wow. When they did get to talking by that time the young bucks were in there, they were all full of fury, well they weren't so much full of fury, but they were excited, something happened that the Indians might do. They might get a chance to show their bravery and all that sort of thing. When they

did finally get Yank quieted down. In the meantime they had put all the women in a stockade corral, that the Indian agent had made them build down by the creek. He had decreed that all the women had to go down there and be in the stockade corral and they had a couple of men to watch over them if they had Indian troubles. That's what the women were to do, they were to take the children and go down and be in this corral and there would be water there. Well, mother said they would just be sitting duck for the Indians if they did that. Anyway, mother sneaked out and Dad caught her and said, "I'll spank you publically if you try and get out of here again. Now you stay in here I haven't got time to stay here and watch you, but you stay in this stockade." Well, there was a women there from Ireland the wife of one of the men, and she was a screamer. She kept screaming and screaming and yelling, we'll all be killed, our blood will run and all that sort of thing. Of course it was driving everybody nuts, so when the men were all trying to quiet her down, mother sneaked out again and she hadn't gone very far till she found a little girl. This little girl was all Indian but she had been raised in a home of white people. She was afraid of the Indians as the white people were. Well, anyway she was hiding in a box and mother took her along with her and along the way they got a couple of boys, that is they saw these boys somewhere and got them and took them with them. They got down to the commissary, to the eating place and mother had the boys bring the wood. One boy was told to keep the fires going, another boy was given a job of cutting meat and this that and the other. They soon got food going and here come one of old Perakinups sons just hell for leather on his horse as tight as he could run and whooping to high heaven and just having a time of his life. It was just a heck of a lot of fun to be an Indian. Well, mother jumped out with a plate of food and held it up in front of him and he just nearly turned his horse over backward grabbing it. As mother explained it, oh she said , this plate of food just took it down in one slurp. Whatever a slurp is I don't know. (Laughs)

Well, anyway the old Major, just as quick as he possibly could he went out and saddled his own hors, which he was never known to do before, because he was a southern gentleman and he wanted the world to know it, so he always had somebody else to saddle his horse. He wanted the Indians to bow to him and all that, the Indians said to hell with him, they weren't going to bow to him. When mother got this plate of food out and here come Perakinup boys and Perakinup was something or other, he wasn't chief of the Indians, but he was a helper of the chief or something like that. I don't know just how you would express it. When this plate of food was gone and the fellow went to hand the plate back to mother, he flipped her a silver dollar. That was the first that mother knew that they had made the old Major give up the money. In the meantime the old Major had saddled his own horse and got the hell out and they never did see him again. He went to Washington, D.C. and lived it up. The white men had taken a petition to get rid of the Major. When they came to my dad to sign this petition, dad said, "No, I know you are right and I know the Major should be gotten rid of. But, if you sign that petition, he will find some way to get rid of you." So dad said, "I need this job, it's the only cash paying job around here and I need the money because," He wanted to have some money to get going. He said, "If you send that to Washington D. C. they will send it right straight back to the Major." Well, that's just exactly what they did, the Major was getting rid of the men on at a time as best he could. It wasn't long after that, this run in with the chief Yank who shot him up or shot at him he didn't, he just hit under his boot heels. Well anyway the time came when dad had a belly full of writing and writing to the Major and trying to get information about what shall I do about this and what shall I do about that and so on. If the Major answered at all, he would just say, "Use your judgement," he didn't give a dame about what happened to the Indians, he didn't care about

anything except his own beautiful hide. Dad wrote and told him after three years of running the Agency and all the responsibility you know the headaches and everything of that sort, when all he was supposed to do was to run the sawmill and produce the lumber to build the buildings with and so on.

Brown: Let me give you a break, us a second. Is this the Meeker Agency or the White Rocks Agency? Which agency is this?

Watson: White Rocks Agency, yes this is the White Rock Agency. Well, anyway the time came he wrote the Major and told him where he could go in no uncertain terms. He go old Pat Lynch to with him to take care of the camp and do the cooking and look after the horse and this, that and the other, wouldn't have anything to except hunt for this ranch he was looking for. What he wanted was a grasslands and lots of water I think, knowing my dad, he wanted something, he wanted a beautiful setting for this ranch that he'd had in mind for so long and so on. He took old Pat Lynch and the first night out they probably camped some place on Brush Creek. About all they brought with them was just plenty of jerky. Dad was getting pretty darn sick of jerky, about the third day of living on jerky, he said it didn't begin to get day light until he was almost up on top of the mountain. That probably would be a wild mountain. He was going southeast and suddenly he jumped a deer that was going in some other direction, I'll have to get that later about the direction the deer was going and so on. Well, anyway he was going hell for leather after this deer and finally the came to the edge of some place where there were a lot of loose rocks. The could do down over it and dad knew that his horse couldn't. So he pulled the horse up suddenly and was just annoyed as he could be that he had lost this deer. When he really looked up there right before him lay this beautiful Island Park. There was grassland on each side of the river fand the beautiful mountains and here was a big stream of water coming out of the canyon and it was paradise, it was just paradise, and dad he always said, he sat there at least half an hour just looking that beautiful land and he felt like very much a tremendous miracle had happened to him. He came on down to Vernal and my grand-dad was in the fort at the time and one of his son's, Uncle Abe, was in there with him. My dad said to Granddad, "Now start over there with a wagon." He told him what to take the food and this, that and the other. He said, "Start over there with the wagon and make for that particular cliff that you can see from here and just keep goin', you will come to this valley and when you get to a place where you can look down in this valley, that I am telling you about you have arrived. I am sure that wouldn't be able to go any farther anyway." Because you could see high mountains around it and all that. That's exactly what happened, right to this day well, let me go back a little, fifty years after that, just when cars were new. So I date this about 1910, we got our first car in 1910. It was probably that year, that Uncle Abe came down from Oregon or Idaho, or where ever it was he lived, for a visit. All the way over to Island Park when I took him over at that time he kept saying, "This is exactly were we went this road.." So the road that my grandfather took with his wagon, the very first wagon that was ever over that road, no road, not even a trail to follow or anything, but just making to this point on the mountain, that my dad had pointed out. The road still goes almost exactly in the same track he went at that time, so he must have been a good road finder.

Brown: Let's rest a minute.

Watson: He married this young girl I think she was fifteen or sixteen when she was married something like that. He didn't want to keep her around the railroad, he just didn't feel like it was

safe place for a cute, pert, brat of a kid to be . So he decided he would get another job, and of course anything around the Indian agency was a government job. He had to get something where they paid cash money because there was no cash money in this country in those days except something like the railroad, you know. If you worked for a man you got a side of beef, or hog or something of that sort or maybe a bushel of grain or something. So he was determined to stay with the government service as long as he could, until he could find this ranch he was looking for.

See this is the picture I told you before didn't I?

Brown: That's sure beautiful.

Watson: Yes, it is. That isn't the house he built, but it's right near where the house was.

Brown: Well, last time I was out there, at Island Park, there was a, I remember an old log house, I don't have any idea whose it was.

Watson: Was it a long time ago?

Brown: It was in 1968, about ten years ago, and it still had windows and everything in it.

Watson: That log house was in the place where this log house is. No, no because my brother lived in this house Was it that, it wasn't that house. Was it a dirted, roofed log house?

Brown: That I can't remember.

Watson: Well, the first house my dad built in Island Park was a two story log house and that was the nicest house that was ever built over there. But mother had insisted that it be down in a grove that she especially liked. Dad didn't want to put it there, he wanted to put it where that house is further up the river. Because of the work. You see the men didn't have a car to jump into in those days. One spring day dad was sick and tired of living so far away from work and where they'd have to walk a mile before they could get to the work and then walk a mile after their days work they'd have to walk another mile back again and it was just too much. So he put a cabin where that place is and it had a dirt roof. When I was a kid and oh I've got Idy Ackerat story around here we must get that in Idy Ackerat was a hired girl and she used to keep her bed up on the house and a.....

Brown: Idy Ackerat?

Watson: Idy Ackerat. The whole family has been gone, there was a whole bunch of boys and this one girl. She was mother's hired girl. When I asked her why she put her bed up on the roof she said so no varmint could sneak up on her. The cowboys all just reared and laughed, oh my, how they did whoop. Idy, was a good girl and she was pretty, she had blue eyes and red hair. That is reddish brown hair, very pretty. She was a very sweet girl. On moonlight nights I used to love to go up there and sleep with her and we could hear the animal noises. We'd hear coyotes on this side yip, yip, yip, and another one on the other side of the field answering him. That was common and we used to imagine what was being said, Idy told me that this coyote over here

when he said, yip, yip, yip, he was saying to the coyote on the other side of the view, “look out I just jumped a jack rabbit and he’s comin’ over your way.” Then the other one would say yip, yip, yip, and that meant, “ I just caught him dinner is ready.” And things of that sort. (Laughs) Well, anyway, sleeping up on the roof of this house we could see the river and we could hear the river, we could hear all the noises and you know for just miles around. One or two times up on the roof a lion screamed, if you’ve heard a lion scream you’ll never forget it. It sounds like the awfulest scream, that a woman might make in terror or pain or something like that. It is the most eerie of all noises I ever remember in my whole life and a few times I don’t remember just how much, but a few times I heard a lion scream and it was always when I was up on the roof with Idy Ackerat.

Brown: You know when your dad moved to Island Park, did he homestead that was that.....

Watson: No, he squatted it.

Brown: Squatted it?

Watson: Do you know what that means?

Brown: No, I sure don’t.

Watson: Well, nearly everybody squatted in those days, because if you homesteaded you had to pay taxes. On squatted land you didn’t have to pay taxes except you had to pay taxes on your cattle, but you didn’t have to pay taxes on your land. So nearly everybody, he did later do something about that, but for many, many years it was squatted property. He couldn’t sell the land but he could sell the improvements if he wanted too.

Brown: If a person was squatted on the land is there any danger that someone would come in and legally homestead it and pay the taxes?

Watson: No, not at that time, but I think that later even in my time I think that squatters right had gone out, for a good many years virtually everybody squatted and you see there was no money, there was just no money in the country. You had money in the fall when you sold your cattle and that was the only time of the year you had money. When a cowboy would quit over at Island Park and dad wanted to pay him off, dad would give him a due bill on the Co-op store. The guy could come over to Vernal to the Co-op store, and maybe he could get money on that due bill. If dad’s credit was good enough he could get money on that due bill. Then dad, when he sold his cattle in the fall, he would pay off the store and all that. But we didn’t always have money some times we did.

I remember this when I was a real small child, we had a two story grainery and two story building, a log building. The bottom of it, they fixed up so when any of the cowboys came over from Island Park, they would have a bed. That was in the bottom of the grainery and then upstairs they kept that locked up at all times. One time my dad’s old partner was going up there and so I tiptoes up behind him just really carefully. He was an old, old man, maybe eighty. I tiptoes up behind him real carefully and he went in and we had grain bin up there and I would say it was as long as this room. One end of it was grain bin and the grain was about that thick all

over but by spring it would all be gone. The horses had to be grained and so on. He pushed the grain back and here was this old hump backed trunk, you know those kinds of trunks. He opened it and I peeked around very cautiously, tiptoed and there was \$20.00 gold pieces, stacks of \$20.00 gold pieces and stacks of \$10.00 and stacks of \$5.00. There were stacks in the other end of the trunk, stacks of silver dollars were, we didn't have any paper money. I was grown before I ever saw paper money, that is I was twelve, fifteen, or something like that. Everything was silver money or gold money and so then I realized for the first time why they always kept locked up there. Of course mother told me that we've got our grain up there and anybody knows cowboys horse was hungry he would steal grain for him. So I accepted that and left it go at that. I never thought anything else until I went up there that day and saw this. When my dad would sell his cattle he would come right back and turn everything over to Mr. Lions and Mr. Lions would pay all the bills and keep the books and everything of that sort. They were darn good partners, and we loved him dearly he was like a grandfather in our family.

Brown: This is Mr. Lions?

Watson: Yes, Thomas Lion. He was born in Michigan on the very, very frontier in early, early frontier of Michigan. When he was a young man he was going to be married, the family had cut the flax and cured it and made it into clothes, made his suit to be married in and his sweetheart had everything ready to go. He had gone over, they were going to be married the next day and he had gone over to see this girl. When he left and got about fifty feet away from the house, and they were to be married the next day and everything was in preparation and everything and he. Now let me think, I have got to get this exactly right. Well, anyway, he turned to wave good-bye to her and there was a flash of lightning and she was killed right there. He saw her fall on the cabin door. Now that would have been about the time or maybe a little before the time of the gold rush in California, because that's when he left Michigan. He went to California and he never did marry and he had a picture of her. She was a beautiful girl, I wish we had that picture. I get off the hook, don't I?

Brown: No, not off the hook. That's a great, you mentioned that your granddad. Was that your mother's father or your father's father?

Watson: That was my mother's father.

Brown: What was his name?

Watson: Adam Coon. Adam Coon was my mother's father. I never knew him he was in the Black Hawk War. He went back east to get a pension and he died while he was back east. He died quite suddenly and he never did get his pension, but he was very old, he was 90 at least.

Brown: How did your dad, once he got his land in Island Park, how did he start his cattle business? Did he just start with a few cattle or how did he get that going?

Watson: Let's go back to where dad saw Island Park. Well, he went back and every penny they could rake and scrape they put into cattle. They had a team and a buckboard, and it seemed to me like grandfather had a team and wagon. Now this is when they first went into Island Park,

that's when first left the agency. When dad wrote the Indian Agent and told him to go to hell, he was leaving that he wouldn't be there any longer, and he didn't get a damn what happened and all that. That's all they had when they went to Island Park, just this buckboard and it seemed to me like grandfather had a wagon, dad had a buckboard and grandfather had a wagon. When they went into Island Park. Granddad's young son that was with him wanted to go up to Oregon or Idaho or up there some place or he had friends up there. So grandfather went with him and therefore, no let me see, no I guess it was after grandfather died, this Uncle Abe went up there. Let's just leave that out, O.K., it isn't important.

Brown: When they first went into Island Park did they take their first cattle with them right then?

Watson: They brought some cattle to Vernal. No, they got the cattle from I think they got some government cattle, a start, I am not sure on that I will have to ask Wanda Staley, maybe she can tell me.

Brown: Anyway, did they start building the herd right then?

Watson: Yes, they started building the herd right away, they started building the head and he may of had some government cattle, he may have been able to get, because they would sell the old cows off, the government cattle and things of that sort. An awful lot of people I might add got their start from the government, from the Indian herd, if you know what I mean.

Brown: No, I don't.

Watson: Well, the government gave cattle to the Indians and the white men didn't have any, what did you expect?

Brown: They rustled them. Did they?

Watson: Well, you wouldn't expect that of our honorable Mormon Pioneer, would you? Well, well, (laughs).

Brown: Did your dad always have men working for him?

Watson: Oh, yes.

Brown: How many men?

Watson: Well, in the summer time when there was haying, when dad got the alfalfa field going. Yo see that was virgin soil and it was wonderful soil, we raised watermelons over there the like of which you have never tasted. They were so delicious . Dad used to send a cowpoke with a wagon load of watermelon every year and tell him to pull up in front of the, (pull up I like that because the old timers used that so much you know, pull your reins, when they were driving horses) to pull up in front of the Co-op store and any friend of the Ruple's would come along was to be given a watermelon. So it was amazing how many friends the Ruple's had that day.

Well, anyway the people would say, they get on of those Island Park melons, oh and I must have the seeds of that melon because they were so delicious. They raise it in this old clay land we have around Vernal and it wouldn't be any relation to what the Island Park melons were. They would grow so big and all that . The alfalfa, dad dug a well on time and in the alfalfa field and the roots were down 30 feet. They didn't even have to water it. They did water it because they had lots of water, but they didn't have to, the alfalfa would grow without.

Brown: Did they have roundups and things like that?

Watson: Oh, of corse, yes.

Brown: Tell me about a roundup.

Watson: Well, I remember one when I was seven years old and the reason I remember I was seven year old because my dad brought me a gun, bought me a .22. We were up on Wild mountain, no up where the Burton place was, Diamond mountain. We were up on Diamond Mt. and the cowboys were so interested in me having this gun. Oh, boy that was great. There was a hill, quite a hill and they said follow this fence up this hill and when you get up there, there will be lots of sage chickens and you can get a sage chicken. Well, I whammed away my gun, the sage chickens were all around me they were just every place. When I got aways from camp, finally I came up to the top of the hill where I was to follow the fence, now they probably told me this so I wouldn't get lost. Well, the fence went up to the point of the hill and then down on the other side. When I was up at that point of the hill there was some sage chickens and I shot at the sage chickens a half dozen times in the meantime, when I got to the top of the hill why here way down was a half dozen sage chickens, I whammed away and of corse they all flew as all the rest of them had done and I wasn't a bit surprised that they flew. But just as I was turning away out of the corner of my eye I thought I saw something fall. I went over there and sure enough I had killed a great big roaster. Well, he was so heavy that it was, I remember I was getting awful tired carrying him before I got back to camp. When the cowboys saw me coming I held my trophy like that and so, my gosh, they carried me in on their shoulders and made a big to-do about the mighty hunter returning and all that (laughs). There were so many sage chickens there were thousands of them and now you virtually never see one.

Brown: You were going to tell me about how those roundups work.

Watson: What happened on a roundup? Oh, yes, well we use to go up in the Burton territory roundup. We would roundup a lot of cattle, cut our cattle out from the Burton's because the cattle would mix. I don't know it was just a camp out everybody camped out and we had a cook and a horse wrangler. And all that kind of thing. We would get our cattle and then they would come down in our territory and on Wild Mt. They might have a roundup at any time and cut their cattle out. Old Burton would come down to Island Park and dad branded with a Q and Burton branded with a Buckle. Well, if Burton come down to out place down to Island Park and when they would pass the meat dad would always say, " Here eat some Buckle beef, it's good beef. You never eat buckle beef at home do you?" And blah, blah, blah, and that was oh ha, ha, business? That was very funny. We would go to their place and they would pass the plate and say "here eat some Q beef, this is good Q beef," and so on. Well, Q was dad's brand.

We had one old man, Old Charlie Goslin. He was the stock buyer and he was short, heavy set guy. I have got more stories about that son-of-a-gun. Most cattle buyers, he was a cattle buyer from Ogden, and most cattle buyers would go up, ride around the herd, tentatively count them and maybe cut out some that were not top grade or something like that and then buy the whole herd. Well, Goslin always had them run through the chute. He looked every animal over, very, very, carefully. He wasn't more than five foot tall, I don't think he was that tall. One time he was up on the mountain now this is where the two cabins used to be. There's quite a deep gulch there and there's a spring at the bottom of the gulch. Well, that was our summer range, (break in tape) There was a candle on the table and the cowboys were sitting around there this was just a one roomed cabin. It was just a place to keep the bedding in out of the rain and to cook the meals when they were up there in the summertime. At one end there was a door, at the east end there was a door and that was just near the this deep gulch that lead up to the Wild Mountain. This Goslin was there he'd stayed all night there. Of course they had to stay all night, so he always sat by the window and this was just a little square window about like that. There was no glass in it or anything like that. It was not daylight yet, because they still had the candle light on the table. The cowboys were sleepy and they were sopping up their bacon grease and all that sort of thing. The guns were behind the cabin door. Now here's the cabin facing east and the guns are behind the cabin door and the cabin door is wide open. Old Goslin was sitting right by the window and he said the cowboys smelled so loud that he had to sit by the window to be able to eat his breakfast. He might have been right if you have ever smelled a sweaty cowboy, (laughs) Well, anyway the first thing they knew we heard was Goslin gasp, now he was facing the east door. We heard Goslin gasp and he jumped for the window and he was short and fat and so on. Any my god they looked and here was a bear he just walked up and he'd just put his hand on the side of the door and he looking in with great interest. He probably smelled the bacon, bacon is very smelly food you know. He was standing there just looking curiously at the cowboys. Well, Old Goslin jumped and tried to get through the window. The only way they could get out of there, because the door was wide open where the bear was standing. The cowboys were very helpful they tried mightily to get Old Goslin through the window. But he was so dog-gone fat they nearly beat the fanny off him trying to get him through the window (laughs). But they couldn't get him through. My dad saw what the situation was and here was the bear standing right there in the door and dad got me way out around this way and got to the place where he could slam the door in the bear's face. He slammed the door and of course they all jumped to get their guns and but poor Old Goslin couldn't move. They brought his bedroll in and draped him over the roll of bedding and went off and left him, that is went about their daily work and left him. He didn't get around for three or four days after that, he was really just nearly beaten to death (laughs). Now what?

Brown: That's pretty good. Did they ever have any sheep men up in that country?

Watson: Well, not as long as dad was up there. But as soon as dad began even to talk about selling Island Park and getting out, then they began to have sheep men. My dad could, he had the bluest, blue eyes. There was something about those eyes that told the sheep men as a matter of fact, if you let your sheep in my territory, you sheep, your herder will float down Green River so the herders were very, very, careful never to let their sheep go beyond, oh, that old alkali spring you know going to Island Park there a place where there is a side above the road. Do you remember seeing that?

Brown: No, I don't.

Watson: Well, what the devil is the name of the spring? Well, that was deadline for Lewy Cabells sheep, and anything east of that was dad's territory and anything west of that was Cabell's territory. I have seen my dad many is the time get off his horse slap his hat down on the ground. I don't know what there was about that then by gosh, he was ready for anything that came. He is backed up many a sheep herders who would get Cabells sheep a little to far over there.

Brown: Did they have violent fights and things like that in those days, were they killing each other?

Watson: No, no, not in Island Park. Dad was a very peaceable man, but he could run a damn good bluff. He depended on the bluff. Most men carried a gun in those days, dad might carry a rifle but never a hand gun, never a six shooter or anything like that. He said that he had more faith in his fellow man than to carry a hand gun.

Brown: Were you and all your brothers and sisters born out in Island Park?

Watson: No, there was only one that was born in Island Park. This is a good story, I have to tell you. Mother had a little boy that was about two years old, that was my oldest brother. She was expecting her second child and she had a little all bundled up and ready to go and everything. They were leaving the next morning to come to Vernal to the mid-wife and Mrs. Fairchild's was the mid-wife. By the way, some of the Fairchild's family were down here not long ago, oh a couple of months ago something like that. They saw my book up at the Daughter's of Pioneer building and they remembered their family talking about the Ruple's so they asked if there was any Ruples around. Of corse they sent them down, and I was able to tell them all about the Fairchild's family. Well, anyway, Mrs. Fairchild's was the mid-wife. But my brother came during the night. Well, the men had already left, to bring Mrs. Fairchild back, the baby was about three days old before the mid-wife got there and by that time they didn't need it. Well, my dad's old partner, and they needed some diapers in the meantime and my dad couldn't bring himself to wash the diapers. Just couldn't bring himself to wash those diapers, he just couldn't get his hands in that sort of dirt and so, on and so forth. Well, anyway my dad's old partner came along and oh, dad took the diapers and tied a string of them up and down his lariat and threw them way out in the river to wash 'em. Well, Mr. Lions came along, Mr. Lions was an old bachelor remember, he never had any children of his own. He pulled that line in and he said, "A little bit of, you know what, won't hurt you." And he grabbed the diapers and washed them out. Mother loved to tell that story that an old bachelor, never had any child of his own, would be the one that had to wash the diapers from the children. Well, anyway mother had an awful lot of milk, she always said she wasn't any relation to the, she was a gurnsey she wasn't a she was a Holstein.... What's those other little yellow cows that give such gave such rich milk? Well, anyway, she had voluminous amounts of milk and it was very painful. She just didn't know what she was going to do about it and her breast were so tender. She just couldn't stand it. This baby was born on the 2nd of April. The deer are like sheep and some other creatures, they have all their babies in the spring you know. So Old Than Galloway who was one of the early river explorers

you find his name...

Brown: Thar?

Watson: Nathaniel, they called him Than. Than Galloway came along, and when he found out what the trouble was, that they were all so up in the air about and didn't know what to do about, he said, "I'll take care of that." He led mother away said he and wasn't gone half an hour before they was back there with a baby fawn. That fawn took care of the problem with no strings attached, it was just alright. Mother said he must have slept well during the night because she wouldn't see anything of him until the crack of dawn in the morning. But at the very early first light that little deer would be in the house and it would be going after his breakfast and it knew where it find it.(laughs) . Isn't that a cute little pioneer story?

Brown: That sure is. In an area like Island Park or Brown's Park or out in the woods away from Vernal, if a woman was about to have a child they would have to send for a mid-wife is that how they normally did it?

Watson: Well, a mother probably didn't need a mid-wife any more than you do right now, because she was as tough as a hickory stick and all that sort of thing. But a lady must be delicate in those days, a lady must be delicate. So they were always talking about there symptoms and everything of that sort. It was the fashion for women to faint and my mother could faint the most beautiful of anyone you ever saw, my gosh. When my sister and I would get to fighting she couldn't do anything with us, she'd always just faint, dead away. She could just faint, so beautiful and of corse my God, my sister always jumped on me then, I was always so shocked to see my mother faint. She would be pounding me on the back to run get some water and we'd darn near drown her and pretty soon she would open her eyes so (laughs). She loved my sister dearly and she admired my sister tremendously, but she couldn't stand me and I couldn't stand her. So that's the way it went. When she was really old there was no one but me to look after her. She used to loved to come down to California and spend the winter with Pappy and me and we took the best of loving care of her and

Brown: Do you know Pat Lynch?

Watson: Yes, well, I'll tell you what I remember about Pat Lynch. I remember him coming to our house in the wintertime and he came to our house in the summertime too, at different times to Island Park place. He lived up the river you see, Pat's home is not very far from Jones Hole and it's up the Yampa River from Jones Hole, Old Pat would come down in the wintertime probably he'd get lonesome, he was always welcome anybody was welcome. Even the outlaws, we usually didn't know who they were, but anybody was welcome that came to the ranch. Well, Old Pat would come and we realized he was living alone up there and we sort of took care of him. He would wait until somebody would go to town and maybe he would come to and maybe he'd just sent to town for groceries and that sort of thing. In the wintertime he would come down on the ice, he might stay a month at the ranch or so, something that sort. When the snow would be off maybe or I don't think before that dad would let him have a horse and he would ride to within short distance for Old Pat which would be five or ten miles maybe. But he could ride to

within that distance of where he lived in the canyon. But he couldn't ride a horse all the way down, if he was going down that way. He would turn the horse loose and of course the horse would come right straight back home.

Brown: Did you ever see his home where he lived?

Watson: Well, I have been down there. But not at that time. How long ago? Oh, Billie, and I and Ernie were over there maybe ten years ago, something like that. He had a cave that he lived in and there was still an old bedstead there that he made and so on. Across from right near where Pat lived there is, well I guess you would call it a cave but it was a crack in the mountain. There was, oh how would I describe that, a well anyway, the cold air would come out. In the summertime you could stand there and it would be just as cool. In the wintertime they said it was warm, that is it was warmer than out of doors. But isn't where Pat lived, but it was near where Pat lived. Pat was very superstitious and he told about this cat dying that he loved so much. How the spirit of the cat came back and how he would pet the cat while he was holding it on his shoulder and the cat would purr for him, the spirit cat would purr for him and all that. Well, we always listened very respectfully to his stories, because it meant a lot to him to get to tell them and especially his superstition stories like the cat spirit coming back and so on.

Brown: Was he a real lonely man? I've heard that he was a hermit.

Watson: He was a hermit more or less and dad thinks that maybe somewhere along his early life he didn't talk about very much, that he killed somebody with a pick, because he said when he first knew old Pat that if they hear of finding a skeleton or anything of that kind indicating that somebody had been killed and Pat would always ask with great interest was he killed with a pick? Then if you said, "No, he wasn't," he has his throat cut, why then Old Pat was no longer interested. But he would always ask, "was he killed with a pick?" So that might indicate or might not that he had killed someone with a pick or thought he killed someone with a pick. Because he left Africa in a hurry, had a black wife in Africa and left a family of kids there when he got a chance to come to America.

Brown: He was Irish or something.....

Watson: Yes.

Brown: do you remember any of his other stories or superstitions that he would tell.

Watson: Not that I can think of.

Brown: Oh, well think about that some other time.

Watson: All right and if any other stories happen to come to me, I do remember this he had very nice manners. He had been taught possibly or at least we felt that in his bring up somewhere he had been in contact with people who were very polite because he had a lot of ideas about what was polite. If you ever saw the cowboys eat, or the cowboys in those days it was something to hear them eat. There was a fellow over there by the name of Arthur I am not sure whether it was

him or some.....one of the white kids was named Arthur it might have been either one of them. Well, anyway they were eating with their elbows you know this kind of thing and Old Pat Lynch pushed his plate back, and pushed his chair back and he said, "Arthur, Arthur, don't you know it's the height of manners to gore a man in the rib while he is eating?" So apparently this elbow work (laughs) I do remember him as a polite old man, or at least old man around women. There was a heck of a lot in the early days that were not very polite otherwise, but might be very polite around women and I think Pat Lynch was that kind. There were very few women in the west. Now my mother when she was a girl growing up in Evanston said that if a girl went to a dance and didn't dance every dance the men would be awfully put out with her. They would just be terribly annoyed because they wanted to dance, my gosh so many of them would ride fifty miles to go to the dance and then if they didn't get to dance once or twice they felt terribly cheated . So maybe that's why they had that exaggerated idea of womanhood in the early west.

Brown: What do you remember about the Bassett's, the Bassett sisters? Did you see them often?

Watson: No, I think I knew the older one, Josie. Josie was the older and I knew her better because I knew her in her old age. I wanted to go down and talk to her about our combined experiences, but she wouldn't do it. Her grandchildren told me that she wouldn't do it. She didn't want to talk about the old days and so on, so forth. But you know the cowboys were a pretty good judge of people and I know the cowboys had a lot of reverence with the Bassett girls and also for Minnie Crouse. Minnie Crouse was way up her 90's. My gosh, I wonder if Minnie's still in town. I saw her recently and she is spry as a cricket and she's about 95 years old.

Brown: Minnie Crouse.

Watson: Minnie Crouse.

Brown: Where does she live?

Watson: Well, she might live over in Brown's Park in the summertime. I could find out for you where she lives.

Brown: O.K.

Watson: But she was here, I , we had this poetry organization meeting we had, I had such a good visit with her. We are the only two old cowgirls left in the country.

Brown: Did you know Ester Campbell?

Watson: Oh yes, I know Ester very well.

Brown: I think she is still alive.

Watson: Yes, I am sure she is. She had dinner at my house. She was a great friend of Billy and Ernie's. Now, there is a gal that can give you the Brown's Park history.

Brown: Crouse or Campbell?

Watson: Campbell.

Brown: Campbell.

Watson: Minnie Crouse is pretty old to be giving any history, and after this mornings performance I think I am pretty old to be giving history myself. My brother Hodd always had great reverence for Minnie Crouse. Minnie told me the other night I was so in love with Hodd. And I know that Hodd was always in love with her, but he felt she was beyond him. He was taught to look up to womanhood and are that sort of biology. She said, "I fully intended to marry Hodd, but I wanted him to plead at my feet," and she said, "If he had just been a little more persistent, he just gave up too easily." If he would have married that old gal, they'd of had a hell of a good time together.

Brown: Are there any Ruple's left, I mean with the name Ruple?

Watson: Well, not in this country, there are some in Oregon or Washington or up there some place.

Brown: When did your dad sell the ranch?

Watson: About 1910, I'll have to think about that.

Brown: Did your family move to town?

Watson: Now I am trying to think about, just exactly when we did move to town, but it was about 1910, because I went over to Hungerford Academy in 1910.

Brown: The what, academy?

Watson: Hungerford.

Brown: Hungerford?

Watson: Yes, we only had two years of high school in Vernal. The Mormons had a high school and the non-Mormons had a high school. Those church high schools were quite popular in the early days because they didn't have any county high schools. They just had county through the 8th grade. When you were through the 8th grade you were suppose to be educated and especially girls because it was a damn fool idea to educate women because all they did was get married and raise kids. So therefore they didn't need any education.

End...

Now what were we talking about basically?

Brown: You were telling me about the academy. You said there was a non-Mormon Academy here in ...

Watson: Yes, there was a non, it was Wilcox Academy, Wilcox Academy, I can't remember what the church academy was, we called it the Mormon Academy.

Brown: Was it Uintah Academy? There was a Uintah Academy at one time maybe that was it.

Watson: Well, I wonder if it isn't Uintah Academy now because a..... We could get that information, I think Wanda could straighten us out on that, she is very devout Mormon.

Brown: Well, I'll tell you what Mrs. Watson, "We have got a lot of information here, if you'd, would you like to call it a morning, would you like to keep going, are you tired.

Watson: No, I'm not tired but maybe you are.

Brown: You know it takes about, an hour an tape, it will take six hours to type it. Have you ever typed from a tape? Well, it's the slowest thing in the world. But a some of these, you might want to look at this booklet here.